



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

December 21st, 2025 + The Sunday before the Feast of Nativity. + Tone 3 + Sunday of the Ancestors of Christ



Hymns for This Week

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. He has trampled down death by death. He has become the first born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy.

Great are the accomplishments of faith, for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain of flames as though in the waters of rest; and the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave! Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit; if we eat of It, we shall live forever and not die like Adam. Christ is born to raise up again what fell in former times, His image.

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare thyself, O Ephratha! The Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Chief Shepherd she carries in her womb. The God-bearing Forefathers will rejoice, beholding Him, and with the shepherds, they will glorify the Virgin nursing Him.

He Who holds the earth in the hollow of His hand now is beheld in Bethlehem wrapped in swaddling bands. We offer prefestal hymns to his Mother, who maternally rejoices having held to her bosom the Son of God.

Please Sing Along!

Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies along with the choir throughout the Divine Liturgy is encouraged!

Epistle Reading - Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient tradition of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. Speak w/ Fr. Innocent if you would like to learn more!

they were not afraid of the king's command. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 1:1-25

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen

generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'" Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.



This Week's Schedule **Holy Trinity Orthodox Church**

THIS WEEKEND

Parish Nativity Retreat - The Book of Revelation **Saturday, Dec 20th**

Divine Liturgy - 9 AM

Brunch - 10:30 AM

Presentation on the Book of Revelation - 11 AM to Noon

Followed by Q & A

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Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Dec 21st

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM,

Coffee Hour

Church School Christmas Play (Yolka)

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After Divine Liturgy
The Annual Church School
Christmas Play (Yolka)
& Cookie Sale

THIS WEEK

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord



Wednesday, December 24th

8:30 AM, Royal Hours

6:30 PM, Compline & Matins w/ Lity

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Thursday, December 25th

Feast of Nativity - Christmas Day

8:40 AM 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

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Friday, December 26th

Synaxis of the Mother of God

8:40 AM 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, Dec 27th

Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Dec 28th

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM,
Coffee Hour, Church School, Special Parish Meeting,
Parish Council Meeting



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study Wednesdays at 10 AM. We are reading through the Epistle to the Romans with discussions. **ON BREAK until 1/14**

ORTHODOXY 101 Wednesdays @ 6:40 PM following the Akathist Service (6 PM): Orthodoxy 101 is for visitors, inquirers,

catechumens or anyone interested in learning more about the foundations of our faith. **ON BREAK until 1/14**

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is **Sunday, December 28th**

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next FOP is **Saturday, January 10th**

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. The next Parish Council is **Sunday, December 28th.**

WANTED: Coffee Hour Teams - Sponsor a Sunday Coffee Hour with a friend. Speak with Joanne Dutko to learn more and sign up.

TODAY - Change Liturgical Covers: Following the Church School Play/Yolka we will change the covers to white in the church to prepare for Nativity. All help is appreciated!

Bible Study & Orthodoxy 101 on Break for the next 3 weeks to return on Wed, January 14th, God willing!

Gift Bags & Poinsettia for Shut-ins will be ready for delivery on the Feast of Nativity after Divine Liturgy. For anyone who would like to take a gift bag to a shut in this Nativity Season please see Fr. Innocent. An email will go out to those who have taken them in the past. Thank you to all who made donations and helped put the bags together. Bags can also be picked up Sunday, December 28th.

NATIVITY POINSETTIA DONATIONS: As customary, our Nativity Poinsettia Donations will purchase flowers to adorn the Church for the Feast of the Nativity. Your donations may be made in remembrance of, or for the health of, your family and loved ones. The names you provide at the time of your donation will appear in the Church Bulletin for the Feast of the Nativity. Please see the signup sheet in the vestibule and give your donation to Mary Ann Kudedy or Deborah Mills. You may also leave your donation at the candle stand with your list of names marked "Nativity Poinsettias". Many thanks and may God bless you for your donation!

Sunday School Christmas Cookie Sale: The Sunday School will hold a Christmas cookie sale on Sunday, December 21st. The annual Christmas Play / Yolka will also take place on Sunday, December 21st immediately following Divine Liturgy. Expect a visit from St. Nicholas as well.

PARISH PRAYER LIST // Homebound: Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Joan, Irene, Alice // **Sick & Suffering:** Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, David Lezinsky, Tom Vaskalis, Tom O'Brian, David, Delores Tressa, Sylvia Dreater, Pearl Tutko, Marie Dutko, Elaine & Forrest Hanson, Alexandra, Jody, Michael Noice, Paul Loftus, Santo, Susan Shiposki, Chari Slater, Dn Jeremiah, William, Alan, Tim // **Recently Departed:** Carmen, Ray // **Pray for our Catechumens:** Tom, Gail, Jaqueline, DeJare, Eric, John, Adrienne, Michelle, Jesse, Katie, Lisa // **Inquirers:** James, Raven, Aaric, Tyler, Dom

DEC 28 - SPECIAL PARISH MEETING: HTOC Parish Council is seeking your approval to fund the expansion of the roofing project to include the Pavillion and Rectory in addition to the Church building. The project would be completed in the spring of 2026. A presentation of the plan followed by your vote will take place immediately following Divine Liturgy on December 28th, 2025.

NATIVITY FAST SEASON GIVING OPPORTUNITIES:

B&B Food Pantry operating out of Noxen Health Center provides food for residents of Wyoming county. This year we will be collecting food for them throughout the Nativity fast until Sunday, December 28th. Please bring the following and place them in the boxes on the Narthex / Vestibule: Canned veggies, cereal, pasta, pasta sauce, instant potatoes, ramen, stuffing, mac and cheese, toiletries such as toothpaste, deodorant, denture cleaner, shampoo. No extra large containers please. If you have any questions please see Joanne Dutko.

Donations for Friends of the Poor: Each year during the Nativity Fast our own Friends of the Poor ministry makes an appeal for monetary donations to help sustain the program throughout the next year. If you would like to make a donation please leave it at the candlestand marked for Friends of the Poor through Sunday, Dec. 28th. Checks can be made out directly to "Friends of the Poor".

Birthdays & ANNIVERSARIES

December Birthdays: David Clark (12/1), Stephen Dutko (12/8), Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratick (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13), Sam Ostipick (12/13), Renee Spinghel (12/17), Joan Austin (12/18), Christa Talpash (12/19), Dcn Lawrence Worlinsky (12/19), Patrick Tutella (12/19), Susan Goobic Howell (12/19), Jeri Basarab (12/21), Mary Ann Kudey (12/21) Dolores Rilko (12/21), Ryan Rusnok (12/23), Anessa Cardoni (12/28) **Anniversaries:** Dan & Lisa Brisk (12/26)

This Week: Birthdays - Jeri Basarab (12/21), Mary Ann Kudey (12/21) Dolores Rilko (12/21), Ryan Rusnok (12/23) **Anniversaries:** Dan & Lisa Brisk (12/26)

*“The Lord of all comes in poverty,
that Adam’s enrichment might
return.”*

St. Ephraim the Syrian

Confession During the Nativity Fast

Dear Parish Family - A reminder for those who regularly receive Holy Communion, and those receiving for Our Lord’s Nativity that we go to confession at least once during each fasting period (and as needed). Preparation for Our Lord’s Nativity is a spiritual work that is supported by examining ourselves and confessing our sins and shortcomings. Don’t miss out on this beautiful work that strengthens us and bring us closer to God. All Orthodox Christians are invited and encouraged to engage and receive Christ - Born in us on Christmas Day!

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*“He was born in the flesh that we
might be reborn in the Spirit; He
descended that we might ascend;
He became lowly that we might be
raised on high.”*

St. John Chrysostom

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*“The Only-begotten became like us,
in order that we might become like
Him—not in nature, but in the
likeness of His holiness and
immortality.”*

St. Cyril of Alexandria

Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305
Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840
Last Week’s Collection (12/14/25) : \$1,874